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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 001147

SIPDIS

STATE FOR PM, WHA, WHA/CAR;
NSC FOR SHANNON;
USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD;
USCENTCOM ALSO FOR POLAD,

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/02/2015
TAGS: PREL MARR DR
SUBJECT: DOMINICAN PRESIDENT APPROVES PROVIDING STAFF
OFFICERS TO SUPPORT IRAQ EFFORT

REF: USDAO SANTO DOMINGO IIR 6 827 9937 05

Classified By: EcoPol Counselor Michael Meigs.

¶1. (C) On Tuesday, February 17 President Leonel Fernandez accepted a proposal from Armed Forces Minister Sigfrido Pared Perez to send Dominican officers to help staff operations in Iraq and to provide support for the Iraqi Area of Operations at Central Command in Tampa, Florida. There will be no publicity for this military cooperation, at least initially. On the basis of that discussion, Pared Perez has given instructions to draw up criteria for selection of as many as 20 officers, from captains through lieutenant colonels, drawn from all services. A key limiting criterion is English language ability. The senior staff plans to pay all allowances ("viaticos") due by regulation (the Mejia administration failed to pay most of the viticos owed to the two 300-soldier contingents sent to Iraq between August 2003 and May 2004). Dominicans believe that they can send these officers within 60 days from selection, which may mean by late May of this year. The specialties most likely to be provided are planning officers and military police trainers (the earlier Dominican contingents performed this task and briefly provided personal security to Administrator Paul Bremer when he visited the area).

¶2. (C) Fernandez's approval of this measure delivers on his pre-election message to the USG that he and his administration would be supportive of the U.S. military in international operations (when his lieutenants delivered that generally worded message in March, 2004, it appeared that under President Meja the Dominican armed forces might be considering a third rotation) one that never materialized). This initiative would keep the Dominicans as candidates for international peace keeping, both in the U.S. effort abroad and in future UN peacekeeping operations. And it would give healthy exposure to upcoming mid-rank officers that could help change the orientation of the Dominican armed forces toward a more professional, service-oriented mission.

¶3. (C) Given these developments, encouraged in part by the visit last month of CINCSOUTH General Craddock, Embassy advises that no rpt no demarche is required on the subject of military support for the Iraq effort; however, a letter of invitation with thanks from a senior U.S. military leader would be appropriate.

¶18. (U) This piece and others in our series can be consulted at our SIPRNET site <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/santodomingo/> along with extensive other material.

MARSHALL